



# ***For Immediate Release*** **Boston Connects, Inc.**

**MAY 14, 2003**

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## **BOSTON CONNECTS INVESTS \$750,000 IN SUPPORT OF SUMMER WORK EXPERIENCES FOR EMPOWERMENT ZONE ADOLESCENTS**

Boston Connects, Inc. (BCI), the community-based organization working to create economic self-sufficiency for individuals, families and communities in Boston's Empowerment Zone, last night approved \$750,000 to fund summer employment opportunities for approximately 550 low-income Zone youth 14 to 17 and 18 year olds returning to high school.

In a special meeting, the BCI Board of Directors discussed the projected greater need than in the recent past to support summer job opportunities for Empowerment Zone (EZ) adolescents. The \$750,000 in EZ funds would be made available to fund summer employment opportunities for approximately 550 low-income Zone youth. Over the course of six to seven weeks, youth will be placed with community based organizations (CBOs), non-profits or public agencies in or in proximity to the Zone where they will learn work readiness skills, such as resume preparation, and financial literacy and/or life skills.

This initiative is closely linked to another of the Zone's goals: Community Capacity Building. Having EZ youth work in CBOs and other non-profits will provide the organizations with additional staffing to help accomplish their mission. It will also bring the youth greater familiarity with the missions of Zone CBOs and non-profits, which they will then be able to share with their families and communities. Ultimately, the bond between such organizations and families in the community will be strengthened.

A Request for Qualifications (RFQ) will be issued by BCI to select one or more non-profit organization(s) to assist with recruitment, placement, follow up and payroll services. Over the course of the placement the BCI grantee would: provide assessments for learning competencies; assist youth in preparing a resume; provide education in financial literacy and/or life skills; oversee the preparation of a portfolio of their work experience; and monitor the placements to ensure success.

In the summer of 2002, Boston Connects, Inc. invested \$500,000 to fund the salaries of 410 youth between the ages of 14 and 17.

"BCI is very happy to continue its support of Zone youth in a school to career model for the second summer in a row. It is a difficult time for everyone, and we hope we can be a positive force by ensuring that more of our youth are gainfully employed," said Executive Director Christine Araujo.

*The vision of Boston Connects, Inc. is to create economic self-sufficiency for individuals, families and communities in the Empowerment Zone, some of the most under-developed and economically impoverished sections of the city. Its mission, in partnership with the City of Boston, is to develop innovative community empowerment initiatives tailored to the diverse needs of Empowerment Zone residents. Visit us at [www.BostonEZ.org](http://www.BostonEZ.org).*



Thomas M. Menino, Mayor  
City of Boston

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*A 501(c)3 Not-For-Profit Community Organization in Partnership with the City of Boston*